

THE Christian Monitor.

VOLUME 1.] RICHMOND, VA. SEPTEMBER 30, 1815. [NUMBER 18.

Miscellaneous.

MEMOIR OF RICHARD BAXTER. FROM MIDDLETON'S EVANGELICAL BIOGRAPHY.

[Continued from page 92.]

Things continued much in the same way during the year 1683, and Mr. Baxter remained in great obscurity, however, not without receiving a remarkable testimony of the sincere esteem, and great confidence, which a person of remarkable piety, though of another persuasion, had towards him: the rev. Mr. Thomas Mayot, a beneficed clergyman in the church of England, who had devoted his estate to charitable uses, gave by his last will six hundred pounds, to be distributed by Mr. Baxter to sixty poor ejected ministers; adding, that he did it not because they were nonconformists, but because many such were poor and pious. But the king's attorney, Sir Robert Sawyer, sued for it in the chancery, and the lord keeper North gave it all to the king. It was paid into chancery by order, and, as Providence directed it, there kept safe, till William III. ascended the throne, when the commissioners of the great seal restored it to the use for which it was intended by the deceased; and Mr. Baxter disposed of it accordingly. In 1684, Mr. Baxter fell into a very bad state of health, so as to be scarcely able to stand. He was in this condition, when the justices of peace for the county of Middlesex granted a warrant against him, in order to his being bound to his good behaviour. They got into his house, but could not immediately get at him, Mr. Baxter being in his study, and their warrant not empowering them to break open doors. Six constables,

however, were set to hinder him from getting to his bed-chamber, and so, by keeping him from food and sleep, they carried their point, and took him away to the sessions house, where he was bound in the penalty of four hundred pounds to keep the peace, and was brought up twice afterwards, though he kept his bed the greatest part of the time. In the beginning of 1685, Mr. Baxter was committed to the King's Bench prison, by a warrant from the lord chief justice Jeffries, for his Paraphrase on the New Testament, and tried on the 18th of May in the same year in the court of king's bench, and found guilty, and on the 29th of June following received a very severe sentence.* In 1686, the king, by the

* This trial of Mr. Baxter was by much the most remarkable transaction in his life; and, therefore, though we by no means affect long citations, yet, in such a case as this, we are under a necessity of stating things from a person who has given us a fair account of them, for the sake of authority. On the sixth of May, being the first day of Easter Term, 1685, Mr. Baxter appeared in the court of king's bench, and Mr. Attorney declared he would file an information against him. On the 14th the defendant pleaded not guilty, and on the 18th, Mr. Baxter being much indisposed, and desiring farther time than to the 30th, which was the day appointed for the trial, he moved, by his counsel, that it might be put off; on which occasion the chief justice answered angrily, "I will not give him a minute's time more to save his life. We have had (says he) to do with other sorts of persons, but now we have a saint to deal with, and I know how to deal with saints as well as sinners. Yonder (says he) stands Oates in the pillory (as he actually did in New Palace Yard,) and he says he suffers for the truth, and so does Baxter; but if Baxter did but stand on the other side of the pillory with him, I would say two of the greatest rogues and rascals in the kingdom stood there." On the 30th of May, in the afternoon, he was brought to his trial before the

mediation of the lord Powis, granted him a pardon : and, on the 24th of No-

lord chief justice Jefferies, at Guildhall. Sir Henry Ashurst, who could not forsake his own and his father's friend, stood by him all the while. Mr. Baxter came first into court, and with all the marks of serenity and composure, waited for the coming of the lord chief justice, who appeared quickly after with great indignation in his face. He no sooner sat down, than a short cause was called and tried ; after which the clerk began to read the title of another cause. ' You blockhead you (says Jefferies) the next cause is between Richard Baxter and the king ; ' upon which Mr. Baxter's cause was called. The passages mentioned in the information, were his paraphrase on Matthew v. 19. Mark xi. 31. Mark xii. 38, 39, 40. Luke x. 2. John x. 57. and Acts xv. 12. These passages were picked out by Sir Roger L'Estrange, and some of his fraternity. And a certain noted clergyman (who shall be nameless) put into the hands of his enemies some accusations out of Rom. xiii. &c. as against the king, to touch his life, but no use was made of them. The great charge was, that in these several passages he reflected on the prelates of the church of England, and so was guilty of sedition, &c. The king's counsel opened the information at large, with its aggravations. Mr. Wallop, Mr. Williams, Mr. Rotheram, Mr. Attwood and Mr. Phipps, were Mr. Baxter's counsel, and had been feed by Sir Henry Ashurst. Mr. Wallop said, ' that he conceived the matter depending being a point of doctrine, it ought to be referred to the bishop, his ordinary ; but if not, he humbly conceived the doctrine was innocent and justifiable, setting aside the intuendos, for which there was no colour, there being no antecedent to refer them to, (i. e. no bishop or clergy of the church of England named.) He said the book accused, i. e. "The Comment on the New Testament," contained many eternal truths —but they who drew the information were the libellers, in applying to the prelates of the church of England, those severe things which were written concerning some prelates who deserved the characters which he gave. My lord, (says he) I humbly conceive the bishops Mr. Baxter speaks of, as your lordship, if you have read church history, must confess, were the plagues of the church and of the world.' —Mr. Wallop, says the lord chief justice, I observe you are in all these dirty catises ; and were it not for you gentlemen of the long robe, who should have more wit and honesty, than to support and hold up these factious knaves by the chin, we should not be at the pass we are.' ' My lord, (says Mr. Wallop,) I humbly conceive, that the passages accused are natural deductions from the text.' ' You humbly conceive, (says Jefferies,) and I humbly conceive : Swear him, swear him.' ' My lord, (says he,) under favour, I am counsel for the defendant ;

vember he was discharged out of the King's Bench. Sureties, however, were

and, if I understand either Latin or English, the information now brought against Mr. Baxter upon such a slight ground, is a greater reflection upon the church of England, than any thing contained in the book he is accused for.' Says Jefferies to him, ' Sometimes you humbly conceive, and sometimes you are very positive : You talk of your skill in church history, and of your understanding Latin and English ; I think I understand something of them as well as you ; but, in short, I must tell you, that if you do not understand your duty better I shall teach it you.' Upon which Mr. Wallop sat down. Mr. Rotheram urged, ' that if Mr. Baxter's book had sharp reflections upon the church of Rome by name, but spake well of the prelates of the church of England, it was to be presumed, that the sharp reflections were intended only against the prelates of the church of Rome.' The lord chief justice said ' Baxter was an enemy to the name and thing, the office and person of bishops.' Rotheram added, ' that Baxter frequently attended divine service, went to the sacraments, and persuaded others to do so too, as was certainly and publicly known ; and had, in the very book so charged, spoken very moderately and honourably of the bishops of the church of England.' Mr. Baxter added, ' My lord, I have been so moderate with respect to the church of England, that I have incurred the censure of many of the dissenters upon that account.' ' Baxter for bishops, (says Jefferies) that's a merry conceit indeed : Turn to it, turn to it.' Upon this Rotheram turned to a place where 'tis said ' That great respect is due to those truly called to be bishops among us,' or to that purpose.— ' Ay, (saith Jefferies,) this is your presbyterian cant ; truly called to be bishops ; that is himself and such rascals, called to be bishops of Kidderminster and other such places : Bishops set apart by such factious, snivelling presbyterians as himself ; a Kidderminster bishop he means : According to the saying of a late learned author, and every parish shall maintain a tithe-pig metropolitan.' Mr. Baxter beginning to speak again, says he to him, ' Richard, Richard, dost thou think we will hear thee poison the court, &c. Richard, thou art an old fellow, an old knave ; thou hast written books enough to load a cart, every one as full of sedition (I might say treason) as an egg is full of meat. Hadst thou been whipped out of thy writing trade forty years ago, it had been happy. Thou pretendest to be a preacher of the gospel of peace, and thou hast one foot in the grave ; 'tis time for thee to begin to think what account thou intendest to give.— But leave thee to thyself, and I see thou'll go on as thou hast begun ; but, by the grace of God, I will look after thee. I know thou hast a mighty party, and I see a great many of the brotherhood in corners, waiting to see what

required for his good behaviour, but it was entered on his bail-piece by directi-

will become of their mighty don, and a doctor of the party (looking to Dr. Bates) at your elbow; but, by the grace of Almighty God, I'll crush you all." Mr. Rotheram sitting down, Mr. Attwood began to shew, that not one of the passages mentioned in the information ought to be strained to that sense, which was put upon them by the innuendoes, they being more natural when taken in a milder sense, nor could any one of them be applied to the prelates of the church of England without a very forced construction. To evidence this he would have read some of the text; But Jefferies cried out, 'you shall not draw me into a conventicle with your annotations, nor your snivelling parson neither.' 'My lord,' said Attwood, 'I conceive this to be expressly within Roswell's case lately before your lordship.' 'You conceive, (says Jefferies,) you conceive amiss: it is not.' 'My lord, (says Mr. Attwood,) that I may use the best authority, permit me to repeat your lordship's own words in that case.' 'No, you shall not, says he. You need not speak, for you are an author already; though you speak and write impertinently.' Says Attwood, 'I cannot help that, my lord, if my talent be no better; but it is my duty to do my best for my client.' Jefferies went on, inveighing against what Attwood had published; and Attwood justified it to be in defence of the English constitution, declaring that he never disowned any thing that he had written. Jefferies several times ordered him to sit down, but he still went on. 'My lord,' says he, 'I have matter of law to offer for my client;' and he proceeded to cite several cases, wherein it had been adjudged, that words ought to be taken in the milder sense, and not to be strained by innuendos. Well, says Jefferies, when he had done, you have had your say.—Mr. Williams and Mr. Phipps said nothing, for they saw it was to no purpose. At length says Mr. Baxter himself, "My lord, I think I can clearly answer all that is laid to my charge, and I shall do it briefly. The sum is contained in these few papers, to which I shall add a little by testimony?" But he would not hear a word. At length the chief justice summed up the matter in a long and fulsome harangue. "Tis notoriously known (says he) there has been a design to ruin the king and the nation. The old game has been renewed, and this has been the main incendiary. He is as modest now as can be; but time was, when no man was so ready to bind your kings in chains, your nobles in fetters of iron; and to your tents, O Israel. Gentlemen, for God's sake, don't let us be gulled twice in an age, &c.' And when he concluded, he told the jury, 'that if they, in their consciences, believed he meant the bishops & clergy of the church of England, in the passages which the information referred to, they must find him guilty, and he could mean no men

on of King James, that his remaining in London, contrary to the Oxford act, should not be taken as a breach of the peace. After this he retired to a house he took in Charter House Yard, contenting himself with the exercise of his ministry, as assistant to Mr. Silvester; and though no man was better qualified than he, for managing the public affairs of his party, yet he never meddled with them, nor had the least to do with those addresses which were presented by some of that body to k. James II. on his indulgence. After his settlement in Charter House Yard, he continued about four years and a half in the exercise of public duties, till he became so very weak as to be forced to keep his chamber. Even then he ceased not to do good, so far as it was in his power; and as he spent his life in taking pains, so to the last moment of it he directed his Christian brethren by the light of a good example. He departed this life December 8, 1691. A few days after his corpse was interred in Christ Church, being attended to the grave by a large company of all ranks and qualities, especially ministers, and amongst them not a few of the established church, who very prudently paid this last tribute of respect to the memory of a great and good man, whose labours deserved much from true Christians of all denominations. He was a man to speak

else: if not, they must find him not guilty?—When he had done, says Mr. Baxter to him, "Does your lordship think any jury will pretend to pass a verdict upon me, upon such a trial?" "I'll warrant you, Mr. Baxter, (says he,) don't you trouble yourself about that?"—The jury immediately laid their heads together at the bar, and found him guilty. As he was going from the bar, Mr. Baxter told my lord chief justice, who had so loaded him with reproaches, and yet continued them, that "a predecessor of his had other thoughts of him;" upon which he replied, 'That there was not an honest man in England but what took him for a great knave.' He had subpoenaed several clergymen, who appeared in court, but were of no use to him, through the violence of the chief justice. The trial being over, Sir Henry Ashurst led Mr. Baxter through the crowd, (I mention it to his honour,) and conveyed him away in his coach. On June the 29th following he had judgment given against him—He was fined five hundred marks, to lie in prison till he paid it, and be bound to his good behaviour for seven years.—*Calamy's Abridgement, Vol. I. p. 368--372.*

impartially from the consideration of his writings, who had as strong a head, and as sound a heart, as any of the age in which he lived. He was too conscientious to comply from temporal motives, and his charity was too extensive to think of recommending himself to popular applause by a rigid behaviour. These sentiments produced such a practice as inclined some to believe he had a religion of his own, which was the reason that when Sir John Gayer bequeathed a legacy by will to men of moderate notions, he could think of no better expression than this, that they should be of Mr. Baxter's religion *. We need not wonder that a person so little addicted to any party should experience the bitterness of all; and in truth, no man was ever more severely treated in this respect than Mr. Baxter, against whom more books were written, than against any man in the age in which he lived. His friends, however, were such as the bare repetition of their names might well pass for a panegyric, since it is impossible they could have lived in terms of strict intimacy with any other than a wise and upright man. But the best testimony of Mr. Baxter's worth may be drawn from his own writings, of which he left behind him a very large number. Many indeed have censured them, though it is certain, that some of his books met with as general a reception as any that ever were printed; and the judicious Dr. Barrow, whose opinion all competent judges will admit, gave

* Sir John Gayer did, by his last will and testament, bequeath a considerable sum of money to persons lately entered into the ministry, and young students for the ministry, with this restriction, that they should be such as were neither for domination nor unnecessary separation, but of Mr. Baxter's principles. His lady, being of the established church, inclined to pay the legacy to such as were within Sir John's description of her own community. Upon this a chancery suit was commenced, wherein it was proved to the satisfaction of the court, that Mr. Baxter was a nonconformist; whereupon a decree went in favour of the plaintiffs. This was certainly a very singular case, and much for the honour of Mr. Baxter, since it plainly appears that Sir John Gayer thought him a man of distinguished piety and uncommon moderation; and, on the other hand, neither church nor dissenters could be prevailed on to part with their right in him, but actually tried it in a court of equity.

this judgement upon them, "his practical writings were never mended, his controversial seldom confuted." Thus far we are indebted to the authors of the Biographia Britannica, for what they have laboriously digested both from his own life written by Mr. Baxter himself, and from the abridgement of it, or additions to it, composed by others. It would, however, not be doing justice to the memory of Mr. Baxter, were we to pass over the account, which his excellent friend Dr. Bates has given us of him: nor would it be justice to our pious readers; for there is a vein of grace, running through the detail of the eloquent author, which tends not only to inform the mind, but to warm and animate the heart, by Mr. Baxter's example.

(*To be continued.*)

From the Christian Observer.

REPLY TO MR. HUME'S ARGUMENT AGAINST MIRACLES.

The credibility of Miracles is a doctrine upon which all Revealed Religion may be said to depend. For, as the external proofs of Revelation are divided into Miracles, properly so called, and Prophecies, which, taken along with their accomplishments, are but another species of Miracles; if facts like these are themselves incapable of being proved by any testimony, they are also incapable of being applied as evidences of a revelation from God.

On this account it is of the highest importance to the interests of Christianity to refute an opinion of Mr. Hume, which he seems to have adopted on account of the powerful evidence which attests the Miracles of the Gospel, an evidence not to be overturned or shaken, but by this bold and novel paradox, namely, that they are incapable of proof by any testimony whatever.

Mr. Hume's position is this:

That no testimony in behalf of Miracles ought to be admitted, unless the falsehood of such testimony would be a greater Miracle than the supernatural facts asserted to have taken place, in which case the value of the testimony would be no more than a balance between two contending improbabilities.

Now, in the first place, it is little better than nonsense to consider the false-

Evidence of a proposition as a Miracle ; for a Miracle is a fact, and a Miracle performed is a fact already past. But, as no interposition of the Almighty in arresting and suspending the common course of nature, which is the idea of a Miracle, can make an event to have happened which has not happened, or *vice versa*, so neither can any similar interposition diminish one shade of probability which attaches to the evidence of such an event. The falsehood of testimony may, therefore, be improbable in the highest degree ; but it is an abuse of language to call it miraculous.

If the impropriety of the terms employed by Mr. Hume on this occasion be not yet sufficiently clear, let the reader substitute to the word "miraculous," a paraphrase, which is exactly equivalent to it.

"No testimony in behalf of Miracles is to be admitted, unless the falsehood of such testimony would be a fact inferring a greater violation of the order of nature, than the Miracles to be proved."

Not to take advantage, however, of Mr. Hume's inaccuracy in the use of terms (in which, however, no small portion of the fallacy of his argument consists,) and in order to afford to his opinion every fair advantage in the representation, let him be understood to mean, "unless the falsehood of the testimony were impossible," which nearly amounts to the same thing with saying that it is not to be admitted at all.

By this time, perhaps, the reader may feel some anxiety to learn on what grounds so extraordinary a sentiment was formed. It is, we are told, because Miracles are contrary to experience, and experience is the proper test of credibility.

The ambiguity and fallacy of this objection are evident ; for whatever is applied as a test, by which truth and falsehood are to be distinguished from each other, must be something positive and definite ; whereas experience is in the highest degree fluctuating and uncertain, nay, the term itself is scarcely intelligible, unless in combination with some person, age, or country, to which it refers ; and even then, whose experience are we to select ? This is no unnecessary question ; for, compare only the experience of one, who has scarcely seen any thing beyond his own village, with that of a sec-

ond, who has traversed the kingdom, and the experience of this second person with that of a third, who is acquainted with every quarter of the globe : compare, again, the general experience of an enlightened age with that of some dark and unobserving period which went before it, and by such a test we must be compelled to reject, not Miracles only, but some of the most obvious and well attested facts in nature.

A native of the torrid zone has never beheld water congealed to ice,* and is almost as slow in admitting the fact upon testimony, as Mr. Hume is in allowing the reality of Miracles. Yet do we not consider this conduct of the understanding as irrational and absurd ? Does it not lead to a conclusion obviously false ? For, after all, such a substance as ice really exists.

Again, I have never beheld, and, therefore, have no experience of the fiery eruptions of *Ætna* or *Vesuvius* : I have never felt any one of those earthquakes which have shaken continents, and laid cities prostrate ; am I, therefore, warranted in refusing my assent to the fact, that mountains may break forth into flames, or that the earth may be agitated by internal convulsions ?

Once more—Few of the phenomena of electricity had been observed before the last century ; yet would it have been right to deny the existence of such a property in matter a century before, had any of its effects been casually discovered at that time, and delivered upon competent testimony ?

And thus, with respect to any other qualities in nature yet undiscovered, a philosopher may, indeed, have reason to suspend or withhold his assent to the evidence on which the discovery may rest ; but supposing that evidence to be such

* Mr. Hume was so pinched by this argument, as to maintain, for consistency's sake, that the King of Siam was right in rejecting the evidence of Europeans for the existence of ice ! What ! right in rejecting the evidence of a real fact ! But the use he intended to make of this strange position was, that the evidence in favour of miracles ought, in common sense, to be rejected, even though they were true ;—and, indeed, this accords with the tenor of the whole argument, which is directed not so much against the existence of miracles, as against the proof of them.

as had never deceived him in any other instance, however extraordinary, however unlike to any thing observed before the appearances might be, he would not hold himself at liberty to reject them as incredible in themselves. Neither is this trial of the understanding at all unfrequent. The science of chemistry exhibits many appearances little less revolving to an uninformed mind than Miracles themselves.

To this argument, however, two objections will be opposed. 1st. That in the instances adduced above, two experiences are opposed to each other, and, as the stronger are allowed to prevail, experience is still assumed as the test of credibility. 2dly. That the instances themselves are physical facts, and, therefore, neither prove nor disprove any thing with respect to phenomena confessedly miraculous.

The first of these admits of an easy solution; for the medium through which alone the experience of one man can be brought into contact with that of another, is testimony: thus, for example: A, who has never travelled out of England, believes in the reality of volcanoes, not upon B's experience, not because B hath beheld such appearances, but because B is a credible witness, and affirms that he hath seen them.

The second objection seems entitled to more consideration. If, however, the real difference between the essence of physical and preternatural phenomena be attentively considered, it will appear to be much less than is commonly supposed, so little indeed as to remove every thing formidable out of the argument. For if we reason upon theistical principles, & this essay is not addressed to Atheists, Miracles are, in reality, no farther improbable in themselves, than as they are unusual; in other words, there is no antecedent presumption arising from the nature of the Godhead, or the constitution of things established in the present world, which should lead us to think it unlikely that the Almighty, for great and wise purposes, may suspend the operation of his own established laws. But there is a presumption arising from the wisdom, the dignity, the general order of his government, that such interruptions would rarely occur. Both these suppo-

sitions harmonize with the Christian testimony in favour of Miracles. But to proceed. Whoever attends to the process of his own understanding in considering this subject, will scarcely fail to discover a fallacy which he puts upon himself, as if miracles were more difficult to be achieved than ordinary facts, and therefore more difficult to be proved. Surely, while we reason thus, we forget in whose world we are, or whose operations we are discussing. To a power short of omnipotence, the common operations of nature would be impossible—for the Almighty it implies no more power to raise the dead than to expand a flower.

In order to set this idea in a clearer light, let it be supposed (and it is at least conceivable, though contrary to fact) that miracles, as we call them, were matters of frequent occurrence; that diseases, for instance, were as frequently healed by a word or wish as by the operation of medicine; or, that the dead were as often restored to life by similar means, as the living are swept away by violent and accidental causes. In either of these cases, the frequency of the facts would occasion them to be confounded with the ordinary course of nature, and no one would conceive the production of such effects to require more power than any of the common operations of Providence. The degree of improbability, therefore, which belongs to Miracles, will be allowed to arise merely from the circumstance of their being unusual.

But if no extraordinary degree or effort of divine power be required to the production of these effects, however stupendous, and if there be no antecedent improbability that in certain circumstances they may be produced, an important consequence will follow, which is, not only that they may be proved by evidence in general, but by the same evidence on which we admit the truth of other physical, though extraordinary, facts.

The last observation applies directly to the testimony of the Evangelists; for in their narratives we have the evidence of two original spectators at least, with respect to miraculous operations; and these operations are mingled with a great number of ordinary facts, generally arose out of them, and were occasioned by

them. The evidence of the one and the other, therefore, is precisely the same. Is it, then, reasonable to garble this evidence at pleasure, to admit whatever is natural in it, and reject what is otherwise, or abandon both together, on account of the conceived improbability of one; or shall we not rather, and does not the preceding argument leave us free to admit both, in consequence of those unequivocal characters of probity, simplicity, and original information, which are stamped upon every part of the evangelic story. It must also be observed, that the actions there recorded as miraculous, were as properly objects of observation, and that to ordinary men, as the most familiar appearances in nature. They were not like the result of many philosophic experiments, which require a scientific eye to remark, and a scientific pen to report them. A Galilean peasant, who had eyes and honesty, was as capable of attesting that he saw sight restored to the blind, and limbs to the lame, and life to the dead, as a philosopher of Athens.

To the same purpose it is to be observed, that in order to produce assent to the Miracles related in the Gospels, we are not called upon to lend our minds to long trains of reasoning, and adopt at last conclusions formed by the Evangelists, but we take a plain story, related by plain men, and conclude for ourselves.

Hitherto we have been reasoning principally against Mr. Hume's conclusion. It may now be worth while to consider whether his minor ought to be allowed; or whether, after all, experience is *against the existence of miracles*. If an advocate for the reality of these mighty works were to reason thus, I affirm that such suspensions of the order of nature have taken place in many ages and countries; surely then they are so far forth *agreeable*, to experience—what could be opposed to the argument, but that all this is learned from testimony? And how has Mr. H. been able to collect a much wider experience on the other side, but from the same source? In fact, there is partial experience on both sides, and that experience is acquired by means of testimony.

But, in the last place, it will be asked, whether experience be allowed to have

no concern in regulating our **assent to evidence?** Undoubtedly it has a very important concern; for though we have shewn that no experience, however extensive, can render all testimony whatever inapplicable to any given facts, so as to constitute them antecedently incapable of proof: yet it has an extensive province of its own, which is, not to sit in judgment upon facts to be proved, but upon the characters of those who are to prove them. Experience will decide that testimony is generally found to be true or false, according to the integrity, competence, and original information of the witnesses; and when it hath decided that an union of these circumstances alone, without regard to the nature of the facts to be proved (supposing them to imply no contradiction) is entitled to belief, experience, instead of an adversary, becomes a firm and faithful ally of Revelation.

O. U. I.

EXTRACTS FROM LUTHER'S WRITINGS.
Open thou mine eyes, that I may see wondrous things out of thy law.—Psal. cxix. 18.

Know, that the Holy Scriptures is a book which make the wisdom of all other books folly, as none teaches us eternal life but this alone. You must then, in the first place, despair of your own reason and understanding, and, falling on your knees must pray to God, with true humility and earnestness, that he will bestow on you, for the sake of his beloved Son, his Holy Spirit, to enlighten you, guide you and give you understanding. In the next place, you must read, with diligent remarks and reflections on what the Holy Ghost intends in the Scriptures. And you must beware of being wearied, or thinking that, after once or twice, you have read, heard, and said enough, and understood every thing to the bottom; for no divine ever did that, but they are like the unripe fruit, which falls off ere it is half ripe.—In the third place, trials are the true process which must teach you, not only to know and understand, but also to experience, how right, how true, how sweet, how lively, how powerful, how consolatory the Word of God is: wisdom above all wisdom!

This is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness.—Jer. xxiii. 6.

The natural man, since in all his works by which he would please God, he is un-

certain and full of doubt, can have no right heart to turn to God, and call upon him ; but shrinks back and flies from him, and must at last fall into hatred of God, and despair : for when he comes to the real combat and must stand before the Judge, he feels and sees, that with all his life and works, he can in no way whatever stand before the anger of God ; but, notwithstanding all, must sink at once into the gulf. Now we must all be placed in such a necessity ; and in order to overcome, we must have another foundation than our righteousness, or that of the law, even this eternal righteousness of Christ, who now sits at the right hand of the father, whom the devil can never overthrow, and the justice of God can say nothing against. Me, indeed, with all my life and works, the devil can overthrow, by bringing before me the Divine law and wrath, which carry every thing away before them, as the wind drives away the feather : but when, instead of me and my works, I point him to the right hand of the Father, where my Lord Christ sitteth, Him he is forced to leave, as he can neither condemn nor overthrow him.

My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and truth — 1 John iii. 18.

The apostle is here speaking against false brethren and hypocritical Christians, who have the Gospel on their lip and on their tongue, but are satisfied with the scum of it only, and allow themselves to think, that to possess the Gospel and faith, consists only in words, and a man's knowing how to prate. And so soon as they once belong to the Gospel, they are the only masters of the science : no one knows so well as they to rule and chide all the world, and none are so evangelical as themselves. But we may see that all this is the mere shell of religion from this, that they take no care to live according to what they say, and to show their love so that others may see that they really possess the Gospel and are in earnest about it. But they seem to go farther than this, that they hold, that a man can obtain the pardon of sin, and be saved only through faith, and that he cannot obtain these blessings by works. And upon this they go on rotten land unsound, and will do no works at all, but pass every thing under the name

of faith, and are in fact worse characters than before, and live, so that the world may justly blame them, to say nothing of their professing to belong to God.

Hallowed be thy name ; thy kingdom come ; thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

Matt. vi. 9, 10.

When God hears us in these three first petitions, he sanctifies his Name in us ; he sets up in us his kingdom, and implants in us that grace which begins to make us truly pious. This grace of God in the heart immediately endeavours to do the will of God ; but it finds an obstinate and refractory Adam, against which it cries mightily to God, and says, Thy will be done ! for grace feels itself sorely burdened with an evil nature. When God hears this cry, he comes quickly to the aid of the grace he loves, and advances the kingdom which he has begun in the soul. He enters with earnestness and might into the battle against the Old Adam. He puts upon him every kind of unhappiness ; he breaks off all his supports ; he annoys and vexes and besets him on every side ; that is, he inflicts on him numberless sorrows and crosses. To this end, he employs evil tongues, bad and faithless men, and, where these are not enough, devils, in order that our own will may be subdued with all its sinful affections, and the will of God may be done, that grace may establish its kingdom, and the love and fear of God alone remain in the heart.

For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren. — Rom. ix. 3.

This noble language implies an ardent hunger and an insatiable thirst, which do not leave a man satisfied though many thousands may believe. Such a thirst labours and rests not, but leads us to say with David, I believe, and therefore do I speak. He who feeds such a thirst for the salvation of his brethren has a certain evidence of a well-grounded faith : but then nothing is more sure than that he must expect the gall and the vinegar ; that is, calumny, disgrace, and persecution on account of this holy and impatient ardour. It cannot be otherwise.—Where Christ is, there must be Judas, Pilate, Herod, Caiaphas, Annas ; there must be the Cross, or it is not the true Christ.